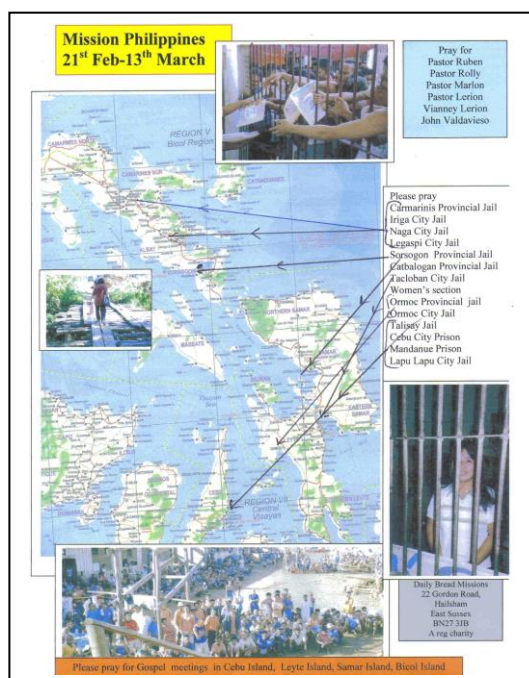


Rough Road from Aboyog. 11

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; Luke 3 v 5



The motor bike slued in the thick mud. Pastor Lerion struggled and tried to control the lurching handlebars. They slipped out of his hands momentarily as the bike dropped into another gully. Revving the machine he kicked the muddy ground with both feet and the engine raced as once more it freed itself from the cloying mess. Bro T and Vianney watched as Pastor crawled up the steep slippery slope. They were carrying their luggage on a side path having alighted earlier when it was impossible to continue.

The afternoon heat was intense as they climbed up the winding path. Constant vigil was required as the path deteriorated and dropped nearer the mud

bath that was the road to Aboyog.

On reaching the top of the slope Bro T clambered back on the bike driven by a local Christian youth He was exceptionally skilled riding this rough track for many years.

Bro T's confidence had been shattered when arriving at the bus stop in Aboyog. They had stopped for a meal in a dirty cafe and the evangelist had watched in horror as the family ate from appallingly dirty dishes. The food looked terrible something that looked like a dogs vomit mixed with dirty rice. The Lerion's seemed unaware of the filthy surroundings

Bro T waited outside walking up and down seeking shady spots. . When the Lerion's emerged , apparently refreshed William went off to negotiate with the bikers. These were youths and young men who ferried passengers through the mountain tracks to Lapu panag village in the jungle region.

The first shock to bro T was the seating arrangements. Five people sitting on one bike. The motorbike had been specially adapted with a frame welded on to the back foot rest extending the foot grips to three . One person sat on the petrol tank then the driver and three others behind him. Bro Thad informed Pastor Lerion that he was nervous on motorbike and have refused to ride only there was no alternative, that he would try on condition that the bikes went slowly. Pastor Lerion then talked with the drivers, instructing one to take things steadily.

Five Up- Setting Off



As they set off bro T clung on desperately but found that it was better to relax as the bump and holes in the road shook every bone and threatened to hurl him off at any moment. The trick it seemed was to ride like you were on a wild bucking bronco.

Relaxing somewhat but ever vigilant and ahead looking for any rough spots they proceeded down a cement road. The countryside was beautiful with fields full of lush green rice with the caribou working at the wheels turning the rice over in the hot sun. Rice was also spread out on the cement road in various places on sheets of plastic laid out to dry.

The cement road soon became a rough track and ascending the curve of the mountain and rising steadily. Bro T shuddered as he remembered the first bridge. As they had approached he could see the river maybe 30 feet below. The bridge was constructed with railway sleepers laid across the main wooden beams which had deteriorated over the years and were now derelict. On crossing the bike reared and jumped as it hit the first wooden sleeper. Bro T's heart nearly missed a beat as he saw a gap in the sleepers. Only two thin beams were left without any hesitation the biker drove onto the beam which was only 4 inches wide. The moment passed so quickly Bro Thad no time to be afraid only with great relief he could praise the Lord for safe keeping and breathe out a silent "Hallelujah."

Dilapidated Bridge



Bob Pastor Lerion's son Bob was sitting behind bro T and must have sensed the tension and the relief as they cleared the bridge. Later as we approached another ramshackle bridge he cried another bridge. bro Thalf joking and half for real called out "Mercy Lord"

This time bro T had time for fear. "Why doesn't he stop or slow down. Hardly daring to look down he kept his eyes forward. Again an Angel must have assisted as they crossed over.. Of course what was an immediate disaster to bro T was grit for the mill to the biker. He never turned a hair only laughingly dismissive, he was certain and confident in his ability. The journey had continued with Bro T clinging on desperately and at other times relaxing and almost laughing for the thrill of it all. Bro T started to count the bridges, there were around ten in all. Some were in better condition but all needed attention. As they climbed nearer the summit

Bro T caught occasional glimpses of the prison buildings through the foliage. It reminded him of a Japanese prison of war camp that he had seen on a film. It looked ominously forbidding..

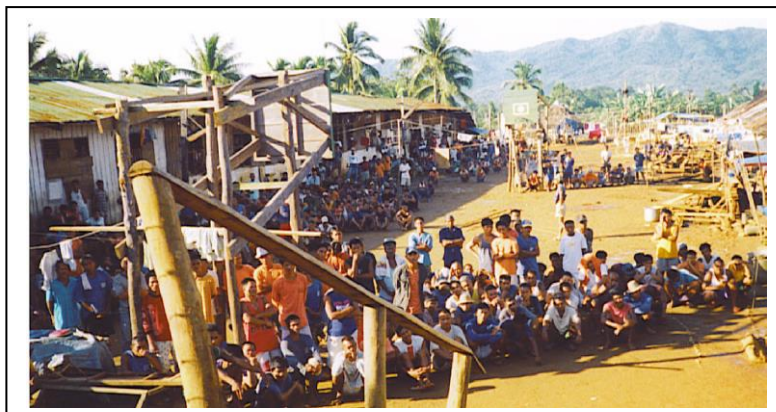
After alighting they all stretch themselves and drank thirstily from the water bottles which contained warm tepid water. Nevertheless they were glad of it. William went off to make some enquiries up the hill at the guard house. When he returned we were all sitting on a bench under the shade of a nearby hut. he told us we would have to wait until one o'clock. as the commander of the prison was at lunch. It was now twelve noon. We sat in a road side hut as bottles of water were brought out and our thirst quenched.. It was good to rest, the heat was debilitating the time dragged Bro T took the opportunity to take some photos.

Later as One o'clock passed William went up again to the guard house and the group were called . Lazily they walked to the hut. The guards were inquisitive. Why

had we come What church did we represent. What was our doctrine? Bro T noticed that they were nervous.. Almost an hour had passed. William had a letter of authority from the governor but despite this the guards were not happy about us and were prevaricating Suddenly inexplicably they allowed the group in . Pastor William followed the guards as they wound up the hill throughout the gate and down a winding pathway into a large compound. Bro T noticed that the four guards accompanying them were armed with AK 47 automatic rifles...

The scene that met them was shocking Bro T was thrilled to see a large group of men squatting on the ground which he estimated around 600 .

He was standing high above on some rough wooden steps maybe 15 feet above the compound floor looking down on the prisoners grouped together in their various tribes . Around the outside of the compound were the rows of dilapidated huts where the men slept. Fires were burning and lines of washing hung listlessly in the hot sun.



Lapu panag Provincial Jail

The two guards fingered their AK47's standing either side of Bro T. as he lifted his voice like a trumpet. The Word was received with rapt attention as the Holy Spirit opened the men's understanding their faces upturned, hungry for truth, needy men, some seeking hope, most longing for some "Good News".

After the message the response was overwhelming. God had been at work.

The Word was like a fire. Hearts were strangely warmed....Eyes were moist with tears, hungry hearts had been touched by God and filled.

Bro T made an appeal. For those who had prayed that sinners prayer to raise their hands.. Bro T's heart melted with gratitude and astonishment as a sea of hands were raised by men not ashamed to confess their sins, repenting, crying out to God and seeking a relationship with "Jesus" The compound was full of God's glory. You could almost hear the angels in heaven praising God and rejoicing at that scene.

Pastor William was now talking with the men. Did they want the group to return? Another sea of hands shot up. The guards were now relaxed and smiling

Reluctantly the group turned around and wended their way up the sloping ground and through the high wired fence back to the guard house, re claiming their luggage and cameras they returned slowly out of the prison to the motorbikes...

Having strapped on the luggage once more and stretching out before climbing aboard the motorbikes for the next leg of the journey Once more back on the track Bro T adjusted to the jolting sliding slipping and hanging on, it had become very humid and the sweat ran down his back, his arms ached and his back groaned, constantly adjusting his seating position as he repeatedly slipped forward each time the bike braked. He could feel the bodily heat of the young man driving and worse still smell his sweating body odour. There were no under arm deodorants in Aboyog.

Suddenly there was a scream. Pastor Lerion's bike had slipped and he had skidded about four yards down a slope heading for the edge of the track. Amazingly he was safe yet only inches away from a drop of 60 feet down below where another river invited certain death or injury. Fortunately a rock had stopped the bikes

progress over the edge. The Lord's protective angel was at work

Vianney, Bob and Bro T ran to where Pastor Lerion lay on his side with the bike with its engine still running still resting on him. The motor was running and he was struggling to get free, yet still holding on to the handlebars before it too slipped over the abyss



Every one was in a state of shock yet William shrugged it off as if he always slipped over on this journey. After ensuring that Pastor William was all right, he waded out again into the heavy mud that was the road and proceeded once more onwards towards Lapu panag village..

Later as the road improved and the surface hardened in the hot sun the convoy started to descend towards the river swaying and braking as rocks appeared suddenly in the surface... Inviting glimpses of refreshing fast moving water flashed occasionally in the afternoon sunlight and the party made better progress as they descended to its banks..

Bro T was puzzled. "Lord he asked . Where is the bridge"? Perhaps it was further along the bank? As the group reached the river bank and Bro T watched idly as a bamboo raft was pulled by a rope towards the shore. Amazingly a plank was laid across it and the motorbike revved its engine as it tried to drop down the river

bank and up onto the plank. It failed three times before heaving itself in one more effort of high revs onto the plank.

Bro T watched amazed as it was pulled across the river with its driver steadying it . The force of the water was pushing the raft sideways but the men were pulling on the ropes controlling it from each bank and guiding it to the shore.. The next obstacle was the steep bank on the far side. Bro T could hear again the constant revving of the engine and the engine stalling as it failed to rise up the bank. Some men were pulling, some pushing and with a final leap it lurched onto the dry land and almost disappeared in a cloud of exhaust fumes.

Soon the raft was making its way lazily across the river. “You’re next” Vianney announced. Bro T was shocked, he shivered with fear . “Lord what is this?”



River Crossing

Having survived the mountain track and the broken bridges he now faced the turmoil of the fast moving water... Stepping down to the river bank he noticed that the bamboo was only loosely held together and the beams were bobbing up and down individually Vainney had stepped on first Bro T hesitated and heard sister Vianney say “brother for loves sake” “Hold my hand sister” Bro T pleaded.” half joking. Unsteadily and nearly slipping off Bro T stepped onto the centre plank. The raft slipped away from the shore and the unusual sight of a tall man holding the hand of a short woman in the middle of the fast flowing river raised a faint cheer from those watching on the shoreline.. Balancing precariously on the plank and trying not

to look frightened Bro T was glad to see the shore looming up fast and welcoming hands reaching out to steady him as he jumped to firm land. Amazing he breathed. "Thank you Lord"

Bro T climbed the hill and stood watching as the rest of the group were brought over. The river boys were splashing about swimming and the sound of laughing voices could be heard as they hauled on their ropes. Soon the group were following Pastor down the village trail avoiding as best they could the streams, jumping from rock to rock to avoid the mud. The jungle was humid and the sweat ran freely down Bro T's back. Soon they entered the village to be greeted by curious children and groups of folk standing at the entrance of their huts.

Bro T was led to Pastor Lerrion's father's home, standing at the top of the village it was a substantial wooden hut. After greeting the wife and children Bro T was invited inside . After a short time waiting for his eyes to adjust Bro T began to take in the details. The ground floor was primitive with half the floor concreted and the other half just rough ground.. Chickens were running freely in and out small piglets squealed and scrapped over bits of roughage. The little babies ran around entirely naked and the room was full of smoke drifting in from the wood fire burning outside.

Later Bob led bro T along a track to the river to bathe in its icy cool waters . This was refreshing but the rocks caused grazing and the strong current almost forced them off their feet so they retreated to a deeper part where the water was calm.



Darkness comes quickly in the jungle and as there is no electricity it is the custom for everyone to go to bed early. Bro T climbed the wooden stairs ducking his head, and found the space upstairs was divided into several small wooden cubicles approximately six feet by six feet and where the occupants sleep on the floor. He struggled to prepare his notes for the preaching session by the aid of a torch but soon he settled down to sleep after the stressful day.

Bang!!! Bro T awoke with a start he had been in a deep sleep. What was that? At first he thought it had been a church bell it had been so loud. Bro T shone his torch around the room and looked at his watch it was 1 AM. No it was not, it could not be Bro T remembered he was in the jungle. There was no repeat sound. Puzzled Bro T lay back and tried to sleep.

Bang!! Oh no, Bro T groaned it had happened again A church clock chiming in the jungle? It was impossible. He fumbled for his torch which showed the time to be 2PM. Bro T puzzled over the situation he was desperately tired, he needed to sleep. This was terrible, he lay in the dark fully awake now and his mind racing. Logically there was no way a church bell would ring. The sound very loud seemed to be coming from just outside the hut. He must have dozed off again only to be woken at 3 AM and then again at 4 AM by the same sound and lastly at 5 AM as the dawn was breaking! What a night!

The sound of a gong ringing out every hour was a warning to the village to keep awake as two years ago the sound of gunfire had woke them and they realised that the village was under attack. The NPA an illegal terrorist organisation had entered the village at night firing their AK47's and killing many. Men women and children had ran into the jungle fleeing the bullets from the automatic weapons. Many had died and it was with great reluctance and a deep fear that after several

days in hiding that they had returned to the village to bury their dead and try to start again.

Later Bro T found out that the men were the elders of the village and had gone out into the jungle to speak to the rebel leaders.

The rebel leaders had asked them. “Who is this man” ? The elders quickly explained that Bro Tony had come as a Christian to preach the Gospel. There was silence and a long interval. The village leaders waited they were afraid as they remembered.

Now they waited. The leader said “We will not touch him”. With a great sense of relief the elders returned to the village to tell the good news.

After an early morning wash which was rather primitive and in view of the whole village but was a great blessing as I had a bucket of hot water.



Later that morning Bro T preached in the village church and after some initial difficulties caused by an over enthusiastic pastor strumming out of tune, loudly on a distorted amplifying system (which Bro Tony soon stopped) the Spirit of the Lord moved deeply upon all and the Word of God touched many hearts. Some were

weeping and quietly sobbing after the Word was given Bro Tony asked the congregation to leave the church ,find a lonely place to pray undisturbed and to seek the Lord in prayer.

After lunch they started on the return journey and Bro Tony was surprised to see a farm wagon pulled by a caribou jolting into the village. He was asked to take a seat and clinking on as the cart swayed on the rutted rough track heading into the forest Bro T was shocked as the cart seemed to be heading towards the river bank.

It could not be? It was not possible? Surely the cart was not going to attempt to cross the river? Bro Tony looked at the swirling fast flowing water, would they would be swept away. Yes the caribou stumbled and tumbled into the water suddenly stopping with a lurch, they had hit a rock the wheels refused to move, Bro Tony had lifted his legs out of the way of the water while the driver whipped the caribou violently with a stick, Tony felt the animal exert all its strength and slowly the wheel lifted and the cart dropped into the water and rocked threatening to throw the occupants into the water .

Then the other bank appeared and the caribou heaved and strained up the steep incline onto the rough grass and then stopped to let the passengers off.

William Vianney and the team clambered once more onto the “Five up” motorbike and set off up the mountain track, re crossing the dilapidated bridges.

The return journey to Aboyou was painful as it took over two and half hours with Bro T clinging to the bike and hurting in a multitude of various places. On arrival they boarded a bus back to Tacloban City which was accomplished at a dangerous and breakneck speed.

“For Loves Sake”₂

*By this we know that we love the children of God: when we love God
and keep His commandments. 1John 5 v 2*

We arrived in Abuyog at 8 10 AM. The town was poor with the main road full of pedicabs and traffic weaving and blocking the way. Slowly we threaded our way through and disembarked in the town centre. A pedi-motorbike loaded our bags and we turned off the main road down a rocky and muddy track through a slum area. I noticed again the stagnant water everywhere. We drove through puddles and mud to arrive outside a hovel. I dismounted and stood precariously on a rock trying to keep my feet out of the muck and resting my bag on a rock. There was no one in the hovel and Vianney sent off the motorcab to seek the owner who was in the market.

Darren returned on another Motorbike driven by Ricardo a Christian. .He had travelled from Tacloban with William on his fathers bike and now busied himself strapping our bags on Ricardo’s bike. I jumped on with Darren behind and we returned to the Centre to find William topping up his bike with oil He said that he needed to make sure it was alright as the journey over the mountains was taxing for the engine. We milled around and I became aware of the interest I was causing as the only white man in the town.

We walked behind some huts to view the bamboats that go to the villages (Barangay’s) in the jungle. I thought it would be good to travel on one of them.

William and Vianney were hungry so we entered a ramshackle café where they indulged in rice, pork and soup. Unspeakable things, which looked horrible. They ate heartily while I sipped two cups of coffee served in a glass! After refreshments I mounted Ricardo's bike with Darren behind me and we set off down the road to Lapu panag .

We had not gone far before we stopped to do running repairs. There was a problem with the drive chain. Spanners were produced then after some adjustments we set off once more only to break down again. We pulled into a garage where William filled his tank. I noticed with horror that the petrol attendant was smoking a cigarette while filling a car. I was shocked and thought it wise to walk away. Crazy man!!!

Setting off once more we stopped again. Same problem. William suggested that Rickardo go back to town and replace the bike so we sat in the shade of a hut and I watched a local man weaving roof segments for huts from Coconut leaves. It was fairly simple and I was told he earned p300 for a thousand.

We finally set off and soon left the main road to drive down a narrow cement road into the hills. The road gradually deteriorated into a rough track and I was shocked as we jolted, pitched and swayed around potholes water pools and rocks. On the cement road I could relax somewhat but on the rough steep tracks I hung on for grim death while we were bucking and ducking like a Wild West rodeo.

It was very similar to the motor cross sport in the UK where the young men ride up the muddy slopes at speed. My head kept hitting the roof as we hit rough patches and as we proceeded the track grew more dangerous. We had to dismount as Ricardo went ahead on his own dodging the boulders.

I was soon splattered with red mud and as we approached a broken bridge across a river I thought surely we must stop and walk across. No such thing we headed straight for the wooden sleepers lying across the beams. Suddenly as we bounced across the railways sleepers I saw with dismay there was a gap of perhaps two yards without them,

Ricardo did not hesitate but immediately drove onto the narrow beam and we crossed without any hurt. It could have been a stunt that Houdini would do in front of thousands but this was no stunt. It all happened so quickly that I did not have time to be afraid but I thanked the Lord we had got across safely.

I was thanking the Lord for safe keeping when suddenly Darren sitting behind me shouted "Brother, another bridge" I looked and sure enough another bridge loomed. "Mercy", I cried half in fun and half for real. Again Ricardo did not hesitate but again we crossed bumping from sleeper to sleeper. I had tried to assess the danger as we approached but whatever way you looked you could see damaged timbers and rotting wood, there seemed no way which would be safe. Each time, for there were around ten bridges in all, Darren would shout, "Brother, another bridge" and each time I would reply "Mercy". I tried to relax and succeeded to a degree. I observed the villages as we passed by, some working in the fields others sweeping their rice on mats, to turning it in the sun to dry.

We dismounted more frequently the deeper we entered the jungle and the slopes became steeper till we levelled out on a plateau. In the distance Aboyog prison stood out like some fortress built like the Japanese prison of war camps. I was told the prison held 5000 prisoners. We dismounted and I felt great relief as I stretched my legs and stretched my aching back. William and Vianney went to the

guardhouse to enquire and came back with the news that we would have to wait as the prison Governor was at lunch. It was twelve o'clock and he would return at 1 PM. We sat in a derelict hut that was a café, at least it was I the shade.

I sat writing my journal, it was hot, sweat started to trickle down my neck, I drank copiously from the water bottle. We watched as some prisoners walked around dressed in brown uniform. They had small maintenance jobs to occupy them for which they would receive a portion of rice for good behaviour.

After an hour or so we walked up to the guard hut again and were admitted this time. A chair was produced for me to sit on as the guards examined the papers of William and Vianney and questioned us regarding our denomination and the purpose of our visit. They took my camera and seemed unhappy about our visit. It dawned on me that they were rather nervous about allowing a meeting.

But after perhaps $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour we proceeded in single file up a narrow curved pathway and through the wire fence into the compound. The sight that met my eyes almost brought me to tears as we descended some steps there were 200/300, (maybe more) prisoners of all types sitting on their haunches waiting for us. On either side of the large compound, two prison huts stretched out and the ground in-between maybe half the size of a football field was filled with expectant faces. My preaching position was high above the men perhaps twenty feet above so I descended half way down the rough steps that had been cut out. I did not realise that there were two armed guards on either side with automatic weapons guarding me, with two other plain-clothes men observing the prisoners above them. I was introduced and began to preach feeling the Power of God upon me.

The Lord gave me great liberty and love to proclaim the truth of the Gospel. The men listened in rapt attention although it came on to rain. Some men got up to

walk to the shelter on the buildings on either side but many were oblivious of the rain, the Lord was speaking to their hearts. Someone had come to hold an umbrella over me. On appeal after I had prayed a "Sinners Prayer" I was thrilled to see a sea of hands indicating their response. How I thank God for so many. I could not quantify what the Lord had done how many had been saved 100/ 150/200? Who knows? But I know in my heart of hearts that the Lord had done a great thing that day. What a privilege to serve him in any way!!!

William asked the prisoners, "Did they want us to return?" "Yes-another sea of hands shot up. The guards who previously had been suspicious and almost antagonistic were now warm and they too said "Yes please return, This is a message we need" Outside I retrieved my camera and we stopped to take a photo before recommencing my journey on the back of Rickardo's bike.

The journey continued to Lapu panag and was a test of faith and endurance. We set off down the mountain track and found the road a quagmire of slippery deep mud. At times it was impossible to continue and again we got of to clamber up the steep rocks while Darren assisted Rickardo and William in pushing and pulling the bikes through the mud and slime which was knee deep in places. At one stage we nearly lost dear Pastor William when his bike slipped in the mud and he rolled over. He was right on the edge of the cliff and only the mercy and providence of God stopped him from certain injury or worse. Had he fallen there was a drop of forty or fifty feet down to the river below.

I was shocked and I could tell that Vianney was moved as she realised the seriousness of the incident. However the two boys ran to William and he righted himself and after a while we thanked God for his deliverance we set off again. Only the Lord was helping us and I started to pray realising we were in great danger. Gradually as we descended we caught sight of the river and with much relief made

our way to the shore. I could not understand because there was no bridge in sight. I guessed we would walk down the bank until we reached a shallow place perhaps?

What I witnessed next will always remain in my memory. Rickardo and William had gone ahead and were parked on the edge of the riverbank as we walked nearer I saw a bamboo raft being drawn towards the bank. We stopped to watch amazed as a plank was laid across the gap and Rickardo revved the engine and mounted the plank. I was praying fervently as one young man held the motorbike steady by the front wheels as the raft was pulled across. On arrival there was much shouting and the sound of the engine roaring as Rickardo tried repeatedly to mount the high muddy bank, there were shouts of victory when after several abortive attempts he made it up the bank to level land.

While all this occupied me I had no time to think but as the raft was being pulled slowly to the shore again I thought "Oh No I'm next". It was true. Vianney sensing my trepidation said "Brother I guess you would not do this in England for a thousand pounds, but now only for loves sake". It was true this journey was testing my resolve, the Lord was reminding me of my motto, "Anything, Anywhere, Anytime"! I said to the Vianney, "Sister you go first" Vianney led the way and we descended to the muddy bank. Willing hands held the raft near the shore as we mounted the unsteady platform.

The bamboo poles had only roughly been tied together so it was very unstable it creaked dipping into the water with my weight. I struggled to retain my balance while holding Vianney's hand and gingerly taking steps. The plank was laid across the center on the platform and as soon as we reached this firm place the raft set off. I had quickly given William my camera and he took a photo when we were half way across. When we reached the other side I nearly slipped, as the rocking

became worse. However after a few somewhat perilous steps I jumped off, with a grateful heart to solid ground. The Lord had kept us safe.

I stood on a rock and looked at my clothes. My new tropical cotton trousers were mud splattered my shoes were ruined with red mud soaked in. We watched while Darren and William came across some of the youths jumping into the water and enjoying it all. I noticed the two towers in the process of being built Vianney told me that the road should have been completed by now. Apparently in 1990 she noticed an article in the paper with a picture of a road completed stating that the road had been completed. She thought the contractor who had been given the contract had completed a part of the road then gone off with the money. But now a bridge was being planned, one that would take the weight of a motorbike, the work had started and the workmen were living in the Barangay (village nearby).

When all were safely across I remounted the motorbike but had to abandon this as we slipped and slid in black slime, the trail was waterlogged. It was safer to walk so we set off on a narrow muddy trail through the jungle. Several times I lost one of my shoes which stuck in the mud and had to retrieve it, they were so filthy I did not matter. Later I rejoined the motorbike and rode into the Barangay like a conquering hero with small children running beside me waving and shouting at the "White man"

“Higher Ground”.³

*And they heard a great voice from Heaven, saying unto them,
"Come up hither!" And they ascended up to Heaven in a cloud, and their enemies
beheld them. Revelation 11 v 12*

The Lord has told me to give you this money. It was Tony's last £150. Tony remembered the van back in England how its rusty wings needed a respray badly. But the Lord had woken him in the night and he knew he must help the Lerion's to get out of the derelict home. It had been swamped in water for over six weeks this year and had been subject to constant flooding over many years. Now the water had taken its toll and the floor was rotten. It had collapsed and the family now had to walk the gangplank through the lounge into the rocky kitchen, This too was in a derelict state with the floor actually rocking as the weight on one end made it behave as a see saw. The thing that had worried and shocked Tony was the stagnant water below the floor.

The Lerion's had eight children and the young ones Don- Don and Douglas were literally paddling in this water where if they tripped on an unseen rock and cut themselves could lead to brain damage or other serious damage should the infected water got into the blood stream.

Tony looked at the Lerion's as they sat outside the hotel in Mac Arthur Park Beach Hotel. N I can offer you this money on three conditions Tony had stated. One you never use this money for any other purpose this money is for Higher Ground.. Two, that you never look to England or U.S.A for help. The Lord himself will provide. God is going to do this. And three Tony had told them. That you never borrow any money however desperate you are. God will test you but never borrow. And then finally Tony told them when I return to England I will not make any appeals for money

Vianney's eyes filled up with tears as we discussed the arrangements. They were to take the money to the bank open a new account and call it, "The Higher Ground fund". Soon after prayer it was time to say goodbye and they hugged each other and Tony watched as they disappeared down the road on the motorbike.

When Tony returned to England he paid a visit to Bels Yew Green chapel to share Mission Philippines with the folks who had been praying. They had been interested and supporting the Lerion's for many years as the family grew up. The church had provided the money for the wooden building they now lived in which was rotting. One woman when she heard of the family in stagnant water came to give some money for a brick for the new house.

The higher ground fund was launched. Over the next few weeks the money came to Gordon Road from every direction. One woman came to say she had emptied her building society account and had withdrawn her last saving to help the Lerion family. Its for the higher ground she said as she passed over a bulky brown envelope. Later on opening the envelope it revealed a bundle of cash. Tony and Sheila counted out the twenty pound notes and were amazed when they totaled £600.

Another woman in the church at Eastbourne wanted to give and arranged to meet Tony at the local Post Office. She withdrew from her account £600. Other gave their widows mite and all the money was duly remitted to the Philippine Bank in London and transferred electronically to the Lerion's Bank in Tacloban city where the total grew and grew. One couple on hearing of the need sent a cheque from Scotland for £5000. It took a year before the land was purchased another 9 months before the house building began on the 4th of January 03.

The total amount sent came to £9260.

All Glory belongs to God

“Nablus Island”.⁴

“Those who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. Acts 8 v 4

At 1 15 PM Pastor Augustow arrived and took us in his car to the Supercat ferry. The traffic was heavy and I wondered if we would make it on time. He told me that he had already appointed teams of elders for evangelism. He thanked me profusely for the gift and told me that he had tested the amplifying equipment we had purchased the day before and had found it satisfactory. We said goodbye and entered the terminal

On entering the terminal we had our luggage weighed and security checked . I had to pay an extra 80 Pesos for my heavy case and we sat in the lounge waiting. I bought some potato chips and found them heavily spiced they left my mouth burning hot also some Dunky Doughnuts. Oh dear...Mmmmm!

I wondered where will we sleep tonight . Pastor Fat was a short man stocky with a powerful testimony. He told me that he had killed a man and spent 18 years in prison. He heard a visiting evangelist preach the gospel and was wonderfully converted. There was such a change in his life the authorities let him go free, since then he had been returning to various prison to tell out the good news that “Jesus Saves” . Pastor Fat had told us he had telephoned Pastor Jewel who will meet us at the at Damugeute Ferry terminal that he will have a have a placard with our name on. Pastor Jewel planned to take us to his home for our stay and arrange the prison visit tomorrow.

Damugete City, Nabras Island

Soon a message came over the distorted amplifier which announced the departure

of the Supercat to Damugeute. It was time to board and we joined the rush as the passengers surged forward to join the rapidly forming a queue at the doors, every one inching forwards surreptitiously, but when the gates were opened some were pushing and shoving trying to store their bags and cases in the best place ready to jump off quickly when we arrived. Once everyone was settled in their seats the Supercat slipped ropes and moved away from the jetty and with a shudder and soon picked up speed as the engines went to full power, The sun reflected on the light blue sea which was smooth as glass as we passed a continual vista of beautiful Islands, palm trees waving and bright sandy beaches glinting in the evening sunlight which made the journey most enjoyable.

After two hours I was concerned as the engines suddenly quietened and we headed for one of the islands and gradually slowed to a crawl and as we drew near to a dock an agile deckhand threw a light rope across to the quay where men hauled the heavier rope and slung this around a nearby bollard. We had stopped after at a place called Tagbileran City on Bosol Island where some people disembarked others taking their place before resuming and then we proceeded to Nablus Island seeing a glittering array of lights on the horizon and arriving in the dark.

Carrying my case down the gangplank eagerly scanning the faces of those who were waiting however there was no sign of any placard and no one to meet us. We waited and watched as all the other passengers dispersed leaving us virtually alone on the quayside. "Lord what has happened" I prayed? I was feeling tired and the prospect of having to seek lodgings in some run down hotel with bed bugs and no air con loomed large in my mind.

After half an hour I sent John off to find a telephone. John Valdavisio was a small man thin with razor sharp cheek bones and a skin which seemed like highly polished leather after years of sunshine. He had a burden for souls and had spent years

totally involved in Prison Ministry.

The Lord had blessed his ministry and many souls had been saved. He was to be my guide and companion in Nablos

While John was away two women came to say, "Are you Mr Daly?". Grace and Maria had come to meet us. They said they had been to the evening service and had panicked when glancing out of the window they saw the Supercat arrivingSo they were out of breath through running. Maria telephoned her father on her cell phone, who I was told was on his way. John Valdavisio returned and we waited together until an old Voxwagan came along and I met Pastor Jewel. Quickly grabbing the cases he loaded the luggage into the boot which was at the front of the car. The boot was too small and the lid was high in the air thus we proceeded to the Bethel Hotel on the seafront. I was a little disappointed as we had been promised a room in the Pastors home. .The cost of each room was P700 and we had to book for two nights. P2800. I had no choice but to pay for John also.

After taking our luggage up we sat in the lobby and talked with Pastor Jewel. He is very intellectual and I was wondering about him because as we talked he never mentioned the Lord Jesus once. He promised to contact the prison in the morning and to arrange a meeting. John had told me that he would ask us to minister in the bible college but there was no mention of this , he seemed only interested in what denomination I represented. I told him I did not represent any denomination but that I preached Christ and Him crucified. After a short prayer they left and he promised to telephone tomorrow at 1 PM

The room was wonderfully clean so I dumped my luggage and found a nearby café where we had some supper. The choice of food for me was poor as I abhorred the smelly dark dirty looking fish which John seemed to relished. I had only potatoes but was grateful for something to eat. I walked on the seafront on the

beach in the dark and prayed. I came across an Internet cafe and sent an email home. Back at the hotel I had to insist on a receipt for my money at the desk they seemed reluctant to give me one. However I got it. I watched the news. They have captured a top Al chaida man in Pakistan. Now Lord thy will be done.. Goodnight....

Monday 3rd March. Bethel Hotel Damuguete.

I received a message Pastor Jewel telephoned to say he is unable to arrange a prison meeting until tomorrow. Oh dear. Lord what is this? He says the Catholics have the prisons all booked up!!! I had to decide should if we stay another day. I said Yes.

9 AM. John Valdavieso is not happy with the situation and is going to visit the prison to see what can be done. So Lord please open doors. Hallelujah.

12 20 PM I walked the beach from 8 45 AM for an hour in the morning sunshine. It was hot but the sea breeze compensated. When I returned John was waiting for me. He had been successful he had visited the prison and persuaded the Governor for us to hold a meeting in the provincial jail. Praise the Lord. We were to go immediately.

We took a pedibike weaving our way through the heavy traffic and soon were at the prison. We waited a while in the entrance and then a guard led us into the prison compound. At the side of the courtyard a section had been partly roofed over with seating for around two hundred people.

Soon the amplifier was brought in and I was preaching to around 60/80 men with others passing by and listening afar off. The Lord greatly helped me. " Jesus said, As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me". Around thirty responded to the message ,they were all very warm,

some were deeply moved, crowding around and shaking my hand... One man asked me for literature in Cebuano dialect. I promised I would try to find some.

John was so pleased. We believe our mission is accomplished and we can book our return ferry for tomorrow. When I was back in my room the telephone rang and it was Pastor Jewel. Had I eaten my lunch? I said "Yes". Could he come at 2 o'clock not 1 o'clock? I asked him. "Have you arranged any meetings for us this afternoon. NO. I then explained that we had already been into the prison and preached the gospel. He was shocked. Were there no catholic meetings? I said no that there had been was no sign of any Catholics.. I said that we would be leaving on the morning ferry. He rang off shocked.

It was sad. He had been of no help at all. I thought perhaps he had not good relationship with the prison authorities and so they had put him off. It would have been an expensive mistake to have come all this way for no meetings. However Praise God the Lord had opened a way. I was grateful to have John along...

Later I took a pedicycle along to the harbour to the Supercat office. But it was closed for lunch. I returned to the hotel and enquired for the office in town. The taking another bike I found the office in the city near the Metrobank and booked a ferry to Cebu and then Ormoc at 6.45 AM the following morning. It was P1600. I returned triumphantly to the hotel my mission accomplished....and all done under my own steam. Praise the Lord..

“Youth Meeting”⁵

Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in manner of living, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 1 Timothy 4 v 12

We made our way back to the Campus where the street was filled with folks arriving in pedicabs and motorcars. There were several police directing the traffic and guards examining their papers as family entered the courtyard. Inside there were hundreds of students in their graduation cloaks and hats milling around. After an interminable wait we found Darren and filed into the back of the crowded auditorium. The graduates came in procession two by two marching to the music of Land of Hope and Glory. It took a lot of time before the hall was full to overflowing with 700 students and the dignitaries arrived to be applauded and took their places on the platform.

The speeches were in progress when suddenly there was a commotion at the door as the folks wanted to get in but did not possess a pass. It got very violent with pushing and shouting the guards foolishly trying to close the doors. I took a photo from the back of the auditorium but as we were uncomfortable could not hear what was being said because of the noise we decided to leave.

We waited outside in the hot sun then decided to get some refreshments in a nearby doughnut bar. Vianney bought me a Coke and two chocolate doughnuts. The place was crowded but it was worth it for the cool of the air conditioning. On returning to the compound we sat in the hot sun but then moved to a shadier place where I was introduced to a Pastor's wife who was a teacher. She kindly found chairs for us to sit on but after watching the folks milling around I thought it would be best to return to my hotel.

I am trying to contact the Philippines airlines to confirm my flight for next week as I am not sure when we will return from Lapu panag village. I have a word of Challenge for tonight as we have Darren's graduation Party. Love must speak!! Give me a man!! DV Lord thy will be done. After I had rested and slept, the message changed to How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

Ormoc Jail 8 AM .6

The road is not suitable it winds around so many bends. It's a long way Tony remembered pastor Lerion and his wife Vianney trying to explain the difficulties in reaching Ormoc jail. It was indeed the other side of the Island and the road was sure to be torturous. But Tony knew in his heart that God had a special reason for a visit to Ormoc and determined whatever the difficulties to make it there come rain or shine.. I am going with you or without you he had told them even if it means getting up at 4 AM let us go.

The Lerion's left without making any promises and Tony wondered what the problem was? It was inexplicable they usually were keen as mustard to do the Lord's work however he dismissed it from his mind.

The next morning Tony was up early and ready to go at 4 AM. The Lerion's turned up at 5 AM and we walked together to the nearby bus terminal. The buses were small compact people carriers carrying around eight folk. At 5 15 AM we set off leaving the city and slowly climbing to the hills ahead, The journey was indeed uncomfortable as the van was traveling at high speed the road winding around the mountain swaying and swerving this way and that to avoid the many pot holes. It was at 7 AM that they stopped outside a large fire station in Ormoc city to walk a short distance to Ormoc City jail...

Pastor William went into the guard hut to arrange meeting but there was a problem as he was told the Catholic priest was coming to conduct a service at 10 AM. What to do? There was a delay and some discussion before William returned to inform us that the guards had agreed we could have a meeting but it would be now. Rather startled we filed into the small jail to see a scene of pathos as a group of perhaps 40 young men gazed out from prison bars.

It was gloomy as the lighting was minimal and a shaft of sunlight just broke through a small window high above. Tony was shocked at the conditions as there were no beds the men apparently sleeping on the floor. There was he noticed a toilet at one end of the cell which measured around thirty feet long by 10 feet deep. The men stood expectantly as this early morning group of visitors entered. The Lord helped Tony give his message.....”

When I was nineteen I was also behind bars, I had no family to return to, no education, no skills, no money, and no hope; Yet God had a plan for me. And I want to tell you some good news this morning God has a wonderful plan for you. Go loves sinners. He hates sin and must and will, punish sinners who do not repent. God commands all men everywhere to repent, to turn away from their sins. Tony warmed to his message seeing the faces of the prisoners with deep interest responding drinking in every word. Their body language told a story, their faces etched with hurt and pain clearly visible in their eyes.

The Lord was helping and the Holy Spirit was touching heart deep into hearts and minds. Yes there was hope, someone cared. Jesus died for sinner not to condemn them but that they might have new life, Spiritual life Victorious life, Eternal life.... At the conclusion of the message Tony guessed that all had been touched hearts changed. Many he knew had believed and received.

It was all very wonderful and joy in heaven over one sinner who truly repents, Tony offered his hand through the bars and it was eagerly and gratefully shaken by many a prisoner. Leaving the darkness in the jail and entering the outside courtyard Tony rejoiced at what God had done. He looked at his watch and was amazed at the time. His watch declared that it was 8 AM Tony was thrilled God had saved around 40 souls and it was not yet 8AM

They caught a motor-Pedibike and found a café in the town where they ordered rice and for Tony coffee. Later as they returned over the mountains back to Tacloban City Tony tried to prepare his heart for the coming meeting. An open air with students in Tacloban City and then in the evening a bible study home group.